DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 254 014 EC 171 723

TITLE Models of Exemplary Practices in Coordinating Special Education and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Project Summary.
INSTITUTION Russell (Harold) and Associates, Inc., Waltham, Mass.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Handicapped Research (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE [84]
CONTRACT 300-83-0158
NOTE 22p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Agency Cooperation; Cooperative Programs; *Coordination; Demonstration Programs; *Disabilities; Educational Trends; Secondary Education; *Special Education; *Trend Analysis; Vocational Education; *Vocational Rehabilitation

ABSTRACT

The paper reviews trends in coordinated vocational programs for disabled youth and describes features of nine exemplary programs that coordinate special education and vocational rehabilitation services. Trends noted include emphasis on participation by handicapped students in vocational rehabilitation, inclusion of work experience programs in many cooperative programs, development of supported work programs to meet the needs of the severely handicapped, increase involvement of schools in vocational assessment activities, the identification of Supplemental Security Income as a disincentive to handicapped student participation in vocational programming, increased contact with vocational rehabilitation by schools, existence of a fear that the "Back to Basics" movement may threaten vocational programing for handicapped students. Each of the nine model programs are summarized in chart form with information on title, location, type of initiative (state or local), significant characteristics, and examples of staff position used. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED254014

MODELS OF EXEMPLARY PRACTICES IN COORDINATING SPECIAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

Contract No. 300-83-0158
Harold Russell Associates, Inc.

Project Summary

For the National Institute of Handicapped Research (NIHR), U.S. Department of Education, Harold Russell Associates (HRA) of Waltham, Massachusetts has undertaken a project aimed at improving occupational preparation of disabled youth by promoting coordination between special education and vocational rehabilitation services. The project's efforts focus on the identification of exemplary coordinated vocational programs and the dissemination of information on how to replicate significant program elements. A Project Advisory Committee, including representatives of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), provides guidance to HRA staff concerning project activities. The project consists of two phases, a data collection phase including a nine-state field study and a training phase. The first phase, which is nearly complete, included the a literature review, development of criteria for exemplary programs, and a nine-site field study.

The literature review resulted in a state-of-the-art paper on vocational program coordination. The research provided essential background information for completing additional project activities. For example, a detailed set of criteria was developed to be used in selecting programs for the field study. (Because vocational education is a critical component in — vocational preparation of handicapped youth, HRA's development of criteria included issues and concerns pertinent to program coordination involving vocational education.)

Program nominations for the field study were supplied jointly by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Regional Offices and by HRA after extensive field contacts. Nine programs were selected for the field study. [Including both state-wide and locally-based programs.] The state-wide programs selected for the field study were: Oklahoma, Illinois, North Dakota, Michigan, and California. The locally based programs selected for the field study were Utica, New York; Torrance, California; St. Joseph, Missouri; and Richland County School District II, South Carolina.

The field visits to the nine selected programs occurred during December 1983 and January 1984. HRA developed a set of questionnaires in the categories of planning, administration and structure, staff training and development, programming, vocational assessment and IEP/IWRP coordination and development. For state-wide programs, staff interviewed state-level agency

CE037823

directors and their staff, especially those whose responsibilities included monitoring or coordinating the statewide cooperative program. At all field sites HRA staff interviewed local program directors, superintendents and/or principals of local school districts, local directors of special and vocational education, special and vocational education teachers, local vocational rehabilitation personnel, parents and students. Documents reviewed included: project descriptions/informational materials, annual reports, budget information, state and/or local interagency agreements, evaluation materials and reports, training materials, project forms and sanitized IWRP's and IEP's. The field study provided the information for written descriptions of model approaches to coordination between special education, vocational rehabilitation and vocational education.

HRA is in the process of compiling a final report assessing what has been learned, noting programmatic trends and significant characteristics and making observations and recommendations about future coordination activities. The final report will provide the basis for the project's training and dissemination efforts. The accompanying materials outline the preliminary findings of the project's final report. They include:

(1) A chart showing significant characteristics of the field study programs.

(2) A summary of the major trends noted during the field study.

MODELS OF EXEMPLARY PRACTICES IN COORDINATING SPECIAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
Contract No. 300-83-0158
Harold Russell Associates, Inc.

Program Trends

There is no single model of successful coordination between vocational rehabilitation, special education and vocational education. When considering different coordination practices, it is important to realize that it is impossible to completely transplant a model and expect it to work for every situation. In order to plan state and local programs, however, it is important to consider the various concepts, ideas and activities which have influenced the structure of current cooperative programs as well as providing direction for new initiatives. For this reason, the project staff has prepared the following list of program trends to highlight areas of commonality among the nine programs included in the project field study.

1) A growing number of programs are focussing on ways to increase the participation of handicapped students in vocational education.

   The concept that career and vocational education is essential for handicapped students in order to aid their transition from school to work provides the stimulus for much of the interagency coordination and many of the program offerings reviewed. Combining vocational and academic programming with the optional provision of work experience for disabled students represents a shift in policy for many high schools which have traditionally held that disabled students must reach a certain level of academic competence before vocational and/or career considerations can be addressed. How the conflict between the two approaches is perceived and defined within the school district will guide the development of interagency efforts.

   The trend toward a competency-based vocational education and training curriculum in vocational-technical schools provides the needed flexibility to increase the numbers of handicapped students in vocational-technical education. An open entry/open exit school program also increases a vocational technical school's ability and willingness to enroll handicapped students. When the curriculum is designed to accommodate the learning needs and capabilities of all students and is associated closely with the competencies needed at various levels in various jobs, handicapped youth benefit greatly. It is important to monitor and encourage vocational-technical schools efforts to adapt to a competency-based curriculum.

Handicapped student participation in vocational education is also aided by the growing use of interdisciplinary personnel who serve as a link between the academic and vocational program. Nearly every program visited has developed positions of this type. The staff titles include Vocational Resource Educators (VRE's).

These staff members perform a number of critical functions including:

- developing vocational objectives for IEP's
- providing information to vocational education instructors on the special needs of their students
- providing additional assistance to handicapped students during vocational classes
- modifying the curriculum, where necessary
- working with special education teachers to insure that vocational and academic programming are integrated

There was general agreement that the support provided by these personnel are crucial if handicapped students are to benefit from vocational education.

2) Many cooperative programs include a work experience component.

Provision of work experience for handicapped students is the focal point of a number of the programs visited. In these programs, handicapped students are placed in actual jobs in the community or in the school and receive a salary and/or school credit for their efforts. In the most well-developed programs, work experience is part of a continuum of vocational services. In these programs, work experience is directly related to vocational education courses and adds an apprenticeship element not available in the vocational school program. Work experience also provides a method of tailoring the vocational program to the student's special needs. Thus, a work experience placement can be specially developed in light of a student's skills, behaviors, and aptitudes and similar considerations.

In some programs, work experience provides a substitute for vocational programming which is not otherwise available. Even in these programs, however, student participation in work experience has generated needed services and stimulated interest in additional vocational programming. A most important aspect of work experience is that it provides some concrete successes for students who have negative attitudes about the academic program.

3) Supported work programs are being developed to meet the needs of severely handicapped students.

While many of the programs visited have shown great success in dealing with less severely handicapped students, most are just beginning to consider the inclusion of the more severely handicapped, particularly those categorized as trainably mentally handicapped.

As attitudes gradually change regarding the rights and abilities of all handicapped people to work in competitive employment, increasing attention has focused on the severely handicapped person's capabilities to work in competitive non-sheltered employment. The supported work model has proven successful in training the severely handicapped person for unsubsidized employment. The supported work model basically provides to the client direct instruction at the work site. Daily training and support is provided the client until s/he is able to demonstrate ability to retain the job independently. A graduated pay scale is often used to reinforce good working habits. The successful results of the limited number of supported work model programs suggests that supported work may become an important training alternative for severely handicapped people.

4) Schools are increasing their involvement in vocational assessment activities.

Vocational assessment of handicapped students has been an area of confusion and concern for many educational personnel. Traditionally, it had been the schools' responsibility to conduct vocational evaluations. In many places, rehabilitation began to get more involved in this area to determine appropriate services for their clients. Now, with schools becoming more oriented to inclusion of vocational objectives in the IEP, there is a recognition of the need for assessments upon which to base these objectives. Schools have found rehabilitation vocational evaluations to be too lengthy and too complex for their needs. Thus, they are working to develop simple short-term vocational assessments for use with school students. VR is working with some schools in the development and interpretation of these assessments. VR then has access to evaluation results, has a better picture of incoming clients, and does not have to duplicate assessments already undertaken by the schools.

5) Schools are identifying SSI as a disincentive to handicapped student participation in vocational programming.

A large number of professionals in special education and vocational education (as well as vocational rehabilitation) have stated that the SSI structure acts as a disincentive in their attempts to train and place disabled youth in

employment. Parents and students fear the loss of benefits and may refuse vocational training opportunities as a result. This is an issue which clearly requires additional study and consideration.

6) Schools are increasing their contacts with Vocational Rehabilitation

The extent to which VR becomes involved with shcool age clients can be dependent upon the level of sophistication of the school district's special education and vocational education offerings. VR can provide technical assistance concerning vocational and job preparation and can be a valuable resource in curriculum development. In school districts with a strong commitment to career/vocational education, the VR relationship centers on the provision of traditional rehabilitation services for the rehab eligible client.

The advantage is that VR becomes involved with the client while s/he is still in school. This ensures that student/clients are serviced by VR after graduation and helps prevent handicapped youth from falling between the cracks of the service delivery system. Moreover, vocational preparation is enhanced and chances of obtaining competitive employment are increased.

7) Schools fear that the "Back to Basics" movement may threaten vocational programming for handicapped students.

A development which needs close monitoring is the "back to basics" movement in education. While there are many positive elements to this movement, it could have a detrimental effect on educational programming for handicapped students. The concentration on basic educational skills and the raising of academic standards are important and needed steps, however, they can also create or result again in conflict about the amount and level of vocational programming provided in relation to academic programming. As the standards are raised for receiving a high school diploma, there may be a movement toward eliminating work experience/work study programs or alternative vocational programs which have a high level of handicapped student enrollment. These programs provide many students who would otherwise drop out with the opportunity to complete high school. The provision of vocational education and alternative types of programs, and the strengthening of basic education programs must be recognized as not necessarily mutually exclusive.

MODELS OF EXEMPLARY PRACTICES IN COORDINATING SPECIAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
Contract No. 300-83-0158
Harold Russell Associates, Inc.

Significant Characteristics of Field Study Programs

PROGRAM TITLE	LOCATION	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTICS	EXAMPLES OF STAFF POSITIONS USED
Cooperative School Program	Torrance, CA	Local	• VR, Vocational Education, and Special Education are equal partners in funding • Continuum of service begins in 10th grade and includes vocational assessment, pre-vocational and vocational classes, sheltered work experience, and outside work experience • Work experience stipends are paid by VR and take the form of incentive wage • Placement of VR counselors in schools • School system employs job developer to work full time with outside employers • Personnel involved in program conduct training sessions for those who wish to replicate program in other parts of the state	• Rehabilitation Counselors VR Counselors placed within school system • Campus Coordinators Special education teachers who work with rehabilitation counselors in operating cooperative program • Community Coordinator Job developer employed by school system • Vocational Student Tutor Teacher employed by school district to serve as liaison between special education and vocational education programming - placed at Regional Occupational Center
Cooperative School/ Rehabilitation Work-Study Program	State of Oklahoma	State-wide	• High level of commitment by state administrators • Broad state interagency agreement	• Supervisor of Third Party Programs State level coordinator funded by VR

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PROGRAM TITLE	LOCATION	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTICS	EXAMPLES OF STAFF POSITIONS USED
			• Agreements between state VR office and local school districts • Emphasis on work experience with salaries paid by private employers • Efforts to establish continuum of service with vocational programming serving as preparation for work experience • Placement of VR counselors in schools • Two day inservice summer workshop for cooperative program personnel	• VR Counselors VR counselors assigned a school caseload, and, in some instances, placed within school system • Teacher Coordinators Special education teachers who supervise students in work
Interagency Service Delivery Systems for Vocational Education and Related Services for the Handicapped	State of Michigan	State-wide	• Extensive state statutory scheme providing for special education services through age 26 when appropriate, vocational education as a required service, and strict education supervision of work experience placements • High level of commitment by state administrators • Comprehensive state inter-agency agreement developed as working manual • Local interagency agreements based on state agreement	• VR Services Program Development Consultant State-level agency representative • VTE Services Special Needs Consultant State-level agency representative • Special Education Services Consultant State-level agency representative • Special Needs/Interagency Coordinator Person employed at state-level to develop and implement state-wide training model

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PROGRAM TITLE	LOCATION	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTICS	EXAMPLES OF STAFF POSITIONS USED
			• Specific assignment of responsibility for inter-agency programming within VR, Special Education, and Vocational Education • Vocational schools are totally competency based • Emphasis on integration of special needs students into vocational schools • Use of paraprofessionals as aides in vocational classes • Massive state-wide in-service training and follow-up efforts	• Student Services Coordinator Person employed by vocational school to provide linkage with special education programming and (later) with VR counselor • Work Study Coordinator Special education teacher employed by home schools to provide consultation to vocational school staff • Special Needs Project Staff Paraprofessionals who work with students in vocational school classes, counselor-coordinators who act as resource personnel for students, and remedial reading and math instructors - employed by vocational school • VR Counselors VR counselors assigned a school caseload
North Dakota Interagency Cooperative Agreement/ Fargo, Region 5	State of North Dakota/Fargo, North Dakota	State-wide/local	• High level of commitment by state administrators • Broad state interagency agreement • Local agreement developed as working manual	• Vocational Resource Educators (VRE'S) Members of vocational education staff who are trained in special education and serve as liaison with special education and VR • VR Counselors VR counselors assigned a school caseload

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PROGRAM TITLE	LOCATION	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTICS	EXAMPLES OF STAFF POSITIONS USED
			• State-level coordinating committee • Local committees patterned on state committee • Coordination integrated into regular activities of VR, Special Education, and Vocational Education without any special funding mechanism • School-funded work experience program	
Project Work Ability	State of California	State-wide	• State-wide program in which Vocational Education serves as lead agency • Active involvement by Employment Development Department (state employment security agency) • Emphasis on work experience with stipends paid by a variety of sources • Reliance on local initiative with programs evolving according to local needs • Significant success in accessing JTPA funds • Sophisticated data collection and reporting system	• Project Director State-level coordinator placed within Division of Vocational and Continuing Education • Site Managers Staff members designated by LEA's to direct local implementation of project

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PROGRAM TITLE	LOCATION	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTICS	EXAMPLES OF STAFF POSITIONS USED
Richland County School District 2, VR Public School Cooperative Program	Richland County, South Carolina	Local	• State VR office contracts with local school districts • Placement of VR counselors in schools • Linkage between VR and Vocational Education • Development of Evaluation and Adjustment Service Unit • Compilation of statistics showing high percent of competitive rehabs and low cost per rehab	• Project Supervisor VR counselor who is responsible for operation of Work Adjustment Center • Rehabilitation Counselor VR counselor based in high school and assigned a school caseload • Production Coordinators Special education teachers who supervise students in Work Adjustment Center
St. Joseph School District	St. Joseph, Missouri	Local	• State VR office contracts with local school districts • Placement of VR counselors within schools • Program includes work experience component with salaries paid by private employers • Missouri LINC provides statewide technical assistance on vocational education for special needs students	• Vocational Adjustment Counselors (VAC's) Special education teachers who are responsible for job development, placement, and supervision • Vocational Resource Educators (VRE's) A professional funded by special education and vocational education to serve as a resource to students in vocational education

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PROGRAM TITLE	LOCATION	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTICS	EXAMPLES OF STAFF POSITIONS USED
Secondary Work Experience Program and Vocational Adjustment Counselors Program	State of Illinois	State-wide	• State VR office contracts with local school districts • Emphasis on work experience with stipends provided by VR • VR counselors work closely local schools • VR provides funding for Vocational Adjustment Counselors (VAC's) within schools • VR involvement has fostered vocational orientation which was previously lacking in schools	• Program Administrator State-level coordinator funded by VR • Vocational Adjustment Counselors (VAC's) Rehabilitation counselor housed within school system - funded by VR on third-party match basis • VR Counselors VR counselors assigned a school case load • Prevocational Coordinators a member of the special education staff who is responsible for job development, job supervision and other job-related matters
VORSE II Project	Utica, New York	Local	• Extensive Summer Work Experience Program • VR hires school personnel to work as job coaches for severely handicapped students during summer • Summer work report is used as hands-on vocational assessment • Placement of VR counselors in schools	• VR Youth Unit Unit in VR district office includes supervisor and 7 VR counselors who concentrate on school population

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PROGRAM TITLE	LOCATION	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTICS	EXAMPLES OF STAFF POSITIONS USED
			• VR involvement in curriculum development • Documented increase in competitive rehabs and decrease in cost per rehab • Serves a population which is 80% developmentally disabled	

BEST COPY AVAILABLE